TEACHER'S CORNER – AUGUST 2018

LITERACY DEVELOPMENT FOR TRUE BEGINNERS

The term *literacy* refers generally to a person's ability to read and write. (Though *literacy* is also used more broadly for describing critical knowledge and productive ability in other things, such as financial literacy, media literacy, and cultural literacy, in this Teacher's Corner, we'll refer to reading and writing skills). When teaching beginner-level students, it is important to provide effective literacy instruction to ensure that students learn to read and write well. This month in the Teacher's Corner, we will discuss five different components, or skills, that make up literacy. Each week, we will present different instructional strategies and classroom activities that help students develop these skills in meaningful ways.

The National Reading Panel in the United States identified five key components of effective literacy instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, fluency, and text comprehension (2000). Each of these areas is defined below.

Phonemic Awareness refers to the ability to understand that words are made up of sounds. More specifically, phonemic awareness includes identifying and manipulating sounds in words. For instance, when students hear the word *bat*, phonemic awareness allows them to break the word into its three phonemes, or sounds: /b/ /a/ /t/. Phonemic awareness skills would also allow students to swap out sounds in the word *cat* to form new words such as *mat*, *cap*, *cut*, etc.

Phonics concerns the relationship between the sounds and written letters in a word. That is, when students hear a word, an understanding of phonics allows them to think about the letters used to spell it. Phonics also allows students to see a word in print and decode it based on their knowledge of letter-sound relationships.

Fluency deals with a student's ability to read text quickly and accurately. Fluent readers recognize words with automaticity; they do not struggle to sound out words while reading.

Vocabulary Development supports students' ability to recognize and recall the meaning of words they hear or see in print. Most vocabulary is learned indirectly through conversation and reading, but some words must be explicitly taught (Armbuster et al., 2006). Therefore, teachers must provide a vocabulary-rich

environment for students who are developing early literacy skills. While this certainly means teaching vocabulary directly, it also means giving students opportunities to interact in the language and to hear language through conversation or literature that is read aloud.

Text Comprehension refers to readers' ability to understand the content of what they are reading as they read it. Text comprehension includes skills such as setting a purpose before reading, asking oneself questions or summarizing during reading, and reflecting and synthesizing information after reading. Teaching students to use these reading behaviors can help students develop these skills and increase comprehension.

To support students' literacy development, teachers must plan thoughtful instruction that addresses each one of the elements defined above. This month's activities can be used to help beginner-level students acquire the skills necessary to start reading or to continue developing their reading skills.

References

Armbuster, B., et al. (2006). *Put reading first: the research building blocks for teaching children to read.* Bethesda: The National Reading Panel and The Partnership for Reading.

"MOVE AND SAY" TO BUILD FOUNDATIONAL READING SKILLS

In the introduction for this month's Teacher's Corner, we defined phonemic awareness as a student's ability to understand that words are made up of sounds. Phonics was described as understanding the relationship between sounds in a word and the letters used to spell it. This week in the Teacher's Corner, we will present an easy daily activity that can help beginners develop skills in both of these foundational areas of early literacy.

One important distinction to make is that phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate sounds in words. Activities that support phonemic awareness do not require that students see the words. Most phonemic awareness activities are done by simply listening and speaking. On the other hand, phonics requires that students associate letter sounds with the written form of a letter. The phonics component of this activity is added at the end under *Extensions*.

MOVE AND SAY

Time: 5-10 minutes daily

Goals:

- To help students identify, count, and manipulate sounds in words.
- To help students segment words into sounds and blend sounds into words.

Materials:

- Small re-sealable plastic bags
- Tokens for students: small objects such as pebbles, paper clips, cotton balls, beans, or coins
- Tokens for the teacher: magnets or paper squares taped to the board for modeling
- Phonemic awareness word lists (there are many free lists that can be found online)
- If students need visual support in segmenting sounds, a printed grid for each student (Appendix A), masking tape, or another way of creating a grid (see Step 3 in Preparation)

Preparation:

1. Read through the procedure to understand the activity and to identify what materials you will want to use.

2. It is helpful for students to practice phonemic awareness activities daily, so consider making students a small kit that can be stored in individual desks or in a specific place in the classroom. Each student will need a plastic bag with 5 tokens. Tokens can be any small object such as cotton balls, pebbles, beans, coins, etc. As students progress to learning words with more than 5 sounds or phonemes, you can add more tokens to each bag.
3. If visual support is helpful to students, you can print copies of Appendix A or use masking tape to create a grid on each student's table or desk. Grids can also be drawn on individual white boards or chalkboards. This activity can also be completed without using a grid at all.
4. Be sure you have a list of words (printed or easily accessible on the computer) that are ready to call out to students. Only the teacher needs a copy, not the students.
5. Arrange your teacher tokens (magnets or paper squares with tape) in a group on the board.

Procedure:

1. Ensure that each student has a set of tokens and (if desired) a visual grid for the activity.
2. Tell students that they are going to work on hearing the sounds in words and that you will show them what to do. If it is helpful, you can draw a grid on the board as a model. Place your tokens above the grid in a cluster.
3. Say "The word I am going to start with is *bat*. I hear three sounds, /b/ /a/ /t/, in that word. I am going to move one token for each sound I hear."
4. Using your tokens on the board, model by saying the sound /b/ and moving one token down into the first box of the grid. Say /a/ and move another token down into the second square. Say /t/ and move a token into the third square.
5. Tap your finger under each token and repeat the individual sounds, /b/ /a/ /t/. Then, sweep your finger across the bottom of the grid from left to right and blend the sounds together to say the word *bat*.
6. Tell students they will now do the same thing with you using a new word. Again, students can have a grid for the activity, but it is not necessary. They can also simply move their tokens on their desks or tables.
7. Say the word *map*. Tell students "Now, move one token on your table for each sound you hear. Let's try it together." Model moving tokens on the board as you and the students say /m/ /a/ /p/.
8. Tap your finger below each token and say the individual sounds again. Have students do this with you. Then, have students sweep their fingers across the bottom of their grids from left to right and blend the sounds together to say *map*.

9. Answer any questions students have. Repeat this activity with new words from the list, monitoring students and stopping to clarify as needed.
10. Once students have mastered the procedure, the class should be able to do the following:
    a. Teacher calls out a word from the list.
    b. Students repeat the word.
    c. Students segment the word into individual sounds and move a token for each sound.
    d. Students tap fingers under each token and repeat the sounds.
    e. Students sweep finger below the tokens, left to right, and blend the sounds to say the word.
11. Complete this activity in class for about 5 minutes using words from the list you have chosen. It is OK to repeat some words, but don't use the same words every time because you want students to make progress. As students become more comfortable with the activity, use more complicated skills and words (see Variations below).

Variations/Extensions:

1. Once students understand the procedures for this activity, you can introduce more complicated words with a greater number of sounds. Add more tokens to students' kits and more boxes to their grids.
2. Sound manipulation: When students are comfortable using the objects to segment words into sounds, you can add an additional activity: sound manipulation. Manipulating sounds in words is also an important early literacy skill. Follow the procedure outlined above in Step 10. After students slide their finger under the objects to blend the sounds into a word, have them pause and change a sound. For instance, if the first word was *bat*, you might say "Now change *bat* to *bag*." Students then have to listen for the sound that has changed; in this case, /t/ has changed to /g/. Have students physically remove the token for the /t/ sound and replace it with a new token for /g/. Then, students repeat Steps 10.d and 10.e for the new sounds and word. This variation can be completed for any sound within the word. For example, starting with *bat*, you could ask students to change it to *bag*, *big*, *rig*, *rag*, *rat*, etc. Many of the free word lists online offer sound manipulation activities as well.
3. Phonics extension: Using Appendix B, have students complete the procedures above using the first grid on top. Say a word, have students repeat it, and then segment the sounds using tokens in the grid. Then, have students tap each token, say the sound, and write the corresponding letter in the grid on the bottom to practice spelling words. The grid can be laminated or placed in a

sheet protector so students can write on it with a dry erase marker and use it many times. This will help students develop phonics skills.

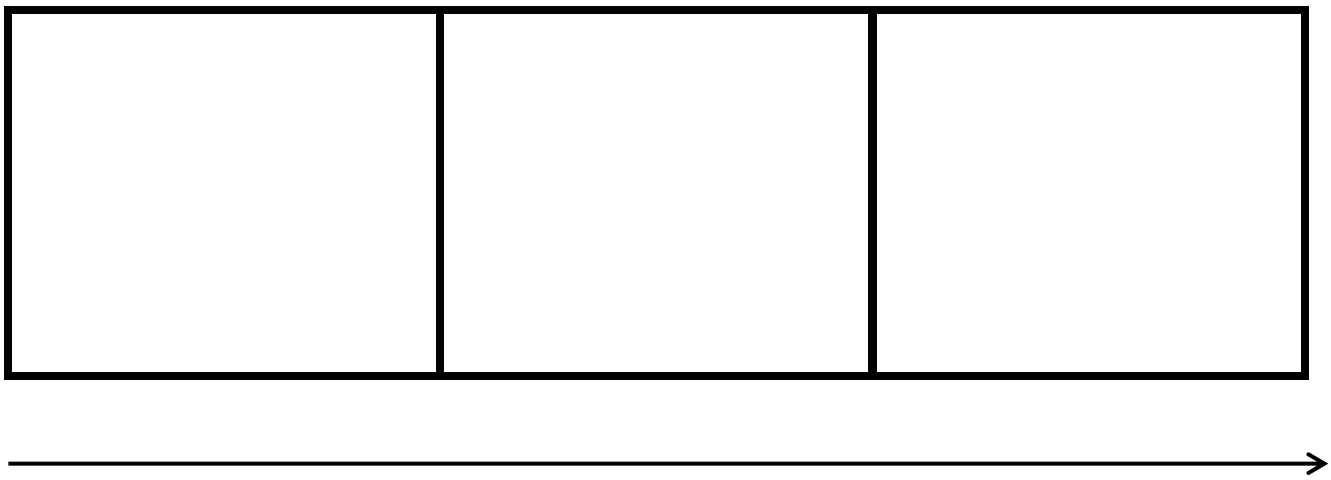
4. Reading and spelling extension: After completing this activity many times, students should begin to transfer this procedure to their own reading and writing. When reading, a student should begin to segment unknown words into sounds and then try to blend the sounds together to read. When writing, a student should be able to segment a word they want to write into sounds and then write the letter(s) for each sound they hear. It is helpful if you model doing this in your own reading and writing when teaching students.

Becoming literate depends on two very basic foundational skills. First, it requires the ability to hear and identify sounds in words. Second, students need to understand that certain letters correspond to specific sounds when a word is written.

There are many great resources online for helping students begin to associate sounds with letters and letter combinations in English. Displaying a set of phonics cards with picture cues in the classroom, and frequently using these cards, is a great way to build phonic and phonemic awareness. Letter sounds should be introduced and practiced gradually using word lists, sorting activities, and spelling games. A daily drill of sounds that students have learned is also very helpful. For free, printable, research-based activities, check out the Florida Center for Reading Research Student Center Activities.

The activity shared this week will help build students' awareness of sounds, how to manipulate them, and how those sounds correspond to written letters. Next week, we'll take a look at how to help students build sight word recognition.

Appendix A: Single Grid for Move and Say



DEVELOPING SIGHT WORD RECOGNITION AND VOCABULARY

Texts written in English are made up of many of the same words. These words are called *high-frequency words* because they appear so often. Sometimes these words can be tricky for beginners because their spelling patterns may not follow typical English phonics rules. Sometimes these words are also referred to as Dolch words, after Edward William Dolch, who compiled a list of English high-frequency words.

Another common term for these words is *sight words*. A sight word is any word that a reader can recognize upon sight without having to use decoding skills. In other words, sight words are any words that a reader can identify automatically without having to sound it out. The goal is for students to become fluent enough readers that all high-frequency words become sight words.

To build beginner-level students' early literacy skills, it can be very helpful to explicitly teach high-frequency words. However, teaching the words on their own does not prove to be very effective. Instead, students must see the words frequently and in context. This can be accomplished by having students read books, interact with a daily message, write in dialogue journals, play games, post word walls, and share writing.

This week's Teacher's Corner will focus on where to find lists of high-frequency words, how to assess what students know, and how to track students' development in fluency. In the coming weeks, additional strategies will be presented to support students' sight word recognition as well as other skills.

FINDING HIGH-FREQUENCY WORD LISTS AND ASSESSMENTS

Lists of high-frequency words can be found in many places online. One great resource is a free site called Mrs. Perkins that offers word lists, PowerPoint presentations, flash cards, and even a book and a story that contain all of the words that are considered to be high-frequency words in English. Additionally, the blog Make, Take, Teach offers a free printable set of lists, checklists,

and graphs to use for assessment and monitoring progress. Of course, searching online will turn up many more useful, free resources.

Regularly assessing students' recognition of high-frequency words is a great way to evaluate their development of fluency. It is suggested that at the beginning of a school year or course, each student be assessed to find out which words he or she already knows and which words he or she will need to learn. This assessment should be repeated occasionally throughout the course as the student learns more words. Some teachers assess monthly or quarterly, but others may assess more or less frequently depending on each student's individual needs. Suggestions for how to assess students are provided below.

ASSESSING HIGH-FREQUENCY WORD RECOGNITION

Time: 5-20 minutes per student

Goals:

- To determine which high-frequency words students can recognize automatically and which words still need to be mastered.
- To help teachers decide which high-frequency words to focus on during instruction.

Materials:

- a printed list of high-frequency words for each student
- one additional copy of the word list(s)
- a blank sheet of paper
- a clipboard if available
- a pencil

Preparation:

1. Print or photocopy a list (or a set of lists) of high-frequency words for each student in your class. The materials mentioned in the section above are excellent resources to use

for this activity, but any list of high-frequency words will also work. However, it is essential that the words are organized from simple to more difficult.

2. Label each copy of the list with one student's name. Each student should have a copy of the list with his or her name. If there are multiple sheets of paper, staple them together so that each student has a packet containing all of the words. This list or packet will be referred to as the *Student Tracker*.
3. Prepare an additional list or packet for students to read from during the assessment. This list or packet will be referred to as the *Assessment List*.
4. Decide on a time that you will be able to assess students individually. You can assess a student while other students are working independently on an assignment. Creating an assessment schedule may be helpful.

Procedure:

1. Gather the Student Trackers, the Assessment List, the blank sheet of paper, and a pencil.
2. Call a student individually over to a quiet area of the classroom.
3. On your clipboard, place the student's Tracker. Put the Assessment List in front of the student. Be sure to present the simplest words first, so that the difficulty of the assessment increases gradually. If the student skips words or feels overwhelmed, it can help to use the blank sheet of paper to cover a portion of the list and reveal one row of words at a time.
4. Ask the student to read the words from the list out loud to you. As you listen, check off the words the student reads correctly on the Student Tracker. Leave the word unchecked on the Student Tracker if the student is unable to read it correctly.
5. Continue for as long as the student is successfully reading words. Stop the assessment after a student misses 8 words in a row.

USING THE INFORMATION FROM HIGH-FREQUENCY WORD ASSESSMENTS

The data provided by high-frequency word assessments is very useful both in terms of individual students and a whole class. Giving assessments regularly can show teachers which words each student is able to recognize by sight and which ones they still need to encounter or study more.

By looking at the data for a class as a whole, teachers can find out which words the majority of the class still needs to work on and plan instruction accordingly.

WAYS TO PRACTICE HIGH-FREQUENCY WORDS AND DEVELOP VOCABULARY

Often, high-frequency words are introduced out of context and students are expected to memorize them in isolation. However, providing students multiple exposures to these words in authentic contexts helps them to learn these words better.

Children's literature is a great way to expose students to high-frequency words. One great strategy to support sight word recognition is to display and read text aloud to your class. It can also be helpful to give students time to read independently or to listen to recorded books while tracking text.

Flash cards are also great for practicing the words, but the cards should have more than just the high-frequency word itself. Flash cards are more effective when they provide context by including an illustration, a sentence containing the word, or a definition (if applicable) on the back of the card.

Next week in the Teacher's Corner, we will present how to use a daily message to help students practice decoding and interact with high-frequency words. Week 4 will discuss how shared writing can be used to develop beginner-level students' early literacy skills.

USING A DAILY MESSAGE TO BUILD LITERACY SKILLS

In this month's Introduction, we defined fluency as a student's ability to read text quickly and accurately. The activities from last week's Teacher's Corner support fluency by building students' sight word vocabulary so that they can read more quickly and efficiently. This week's Teacher's Corner presents an activity that can help students apply phonics skills and develop sight word vocabulary. Development in both of these skills can help improve students' reading fluency.

THE DAILY MESSAGE

Time: 5-10 minutes daily/each class meeting

Goals:

- To help build students' knowledge of sight words.
- To help students segment words into sounds and blend sounds into words while reading a meaningful message.

Materials: a place to write a short note that will be visible to all students in the class, whether on the board, on chart paper, or in an electronic document

Preparation:

1. Consider sounds and letters that your students already know or have been studying recently. It would be helpful to include words in the daily message that contain letters and sounds they have studied most recently. Doing so provides additional reinforcement.
2. Plan and write the message before your students arrive. If you have multiple classes, you may need to write a specific message to each group. This activity can be used with students of any age.
3. Begin your message with a greeting. This can be formal, such as "Dear Class," or more casual, like "Hi, Kids!" Varying the way you greet students is another opportunity to teach different types of vocabulary and expressions.
4. Include a few sentences that will be interesting to the class. Tell about something you did that morning or what you are excited about for today. If you have students who are very new to English, you may choose to write only a few sentences to begin with. Messages can grow longer

as students gain more English. The message is an opportunity to include words with specific sounds or letters (see the examples for ideas).

5. It is fun and engaging to end your letter with a question that can prompt discussion. To respond to your questions, students will practice reading the message and then practice using vocabulary and forming sentences in their answers.
6. End the message with a closing. As noted with the greeting in Step 3, the closing can vary and provides another opportunity to include different vocabulary and ways of saying goodbye.

Example Messages:

1	2	3
Hi Class! This morning I rode in a car to school. I saw many things that begin with the letter c. I saw a cat, a cab, a cap, and a cow. What else do you know that begins with c? From, Ms. Wells	Good afternoon, students! I am very excited because after school today I will take a taxi to the airport. I am going to pick up my friend Rania who is coming to visit from her country! Have you ever been on an airplane before? When? From, Mr. Sharif	Dear Students, Yesterday, I scraped my knee and scratched my elbow. I was jogging and a person driving a car didn't see me. Their tires screeched and they stopped just in time! I screamed and fell down. Have you ever fallen and had a scratch like this? Sadly, Mr. Thomas

Procedure:

1. You can choose to have the message on display as students enter the classroom, or wait until they are settled and then share it with them.
2. Read the message aloud to students once or twice. Then, using your hand or a pointer, track the text as the class reads it out loud together. For additional practice, you can have students read it again in pairs and then have each partner take a turn reading it to the other.
3. If you included a question at the end of the message, allow students a chance to share their answers. Again, this can be done with a partner or small group, or you can call on individual students to share ideas.
4. You can even create a list or chart of student responses to your question and read them together if time permits. This will give students even more exposure to written language.
5. Provide opportunities for students to interact with the message by finding targeted letters or words. You can have students come up to the board to find things by pointing, circling, or highlighting. Students can also make notations in an electronic document by changing colors or

underlining. For instance, in Example 1 from the table above, students could come up and circle a letter *c* in the text until all of them are located. In Example 2, students could locate sight words such as *before*, *been*, *from*, etc. In Example 3, students could look for words with the *scr-* spelling pattern.

6. Repeat this activity each day or class meeting with a new message to provide students with more practice.

Variations/Extensions:

1. The daily message can also be used to start a dialogue journal with students. Dialogue journals are ongoing written messages back and forth between two people, in this case between a student and a teacher. For this extension, each student would need a notebook. Once you have displayed your message and followed the steps outlined in the procedure above, you can have students write you a response. They can respond to the question from your message or even write you a whole message. Students can use your message as a model for their own. After they write their messages, you would write a quick reply to each student in his or her notebook. This journal extension can be repeated daily or done only a few times per week, depending on what is best for your students. For more information about using dialogue journals, take a look at the *English Teaching Forum* article called The Dialogue Journal: A Tool for Building Better Writers.
2. When students feel more confident and have more English skills, you can involve them in reading and writing the daily message. A student helper can be in charge of reading the message and leading the discussion to answer the question. Eventually, you can assign each student a date to write and share his or her own message to the class.

Students of all ages and levels really enjoy this daily message activity. It is a great warm-up at the beginning of class and helps build relationships, especially if students are given a chance to write their own messages. The message provides an opportunity to reinforce beginner students' phonics knowledge, sight word vocabulary, reading fluency, and basic literacy skills while being fun and engaging. Next week's Teacher's Corner will focus on helping students develop literacy skills through activities that support comprehension in beginning readers.

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT COMPREHENSION IN EARLY LITERACY

Focusing on comprehension with beginner-level students can seem challenging. When students are just beginning to learn how to read, it can feel overwhelming to add comprehension activities. However, beginning levels are actually the best time to start training students to think purposefully about and reflect on what they are reading. Teaching these important skills early on helps students build a strong foundation for successful reading as they take on more challenging texts. This week in the Teacher's Corner, we will discuss simple strategies for supporting students' comprehension before, during, and after reading.

BEFORE READING

Setting a Purpose for Reading

Telling students why they are going to read a certain text helps them to focus as they read. If the class is reading a non-fiction book or article, briefly state what information students will learn and what they will do with the information. Similarly, when students will be reading fiction text, state what the story will be about and what you would like students to think about as they read. Doing this gives students something to pay attention to and to reflect on. Below are some example purpose statements for non-fiction and fiction texts.

Purpose Statements	
Non-fiction Text	**Fiction Text**
• We are going to read about the life cycle of a butterfly. You will learn about five steps and use what you learn to create a poster. • Today we will read about how Serena Williams became a famous tennis player. After we read, we will write a list of questions we would like to ask Ms. Williams about her life. • The text we will read is going to teach us about how elephants live. We will learn information about what they eat, how they sleep, and ways that they are sometimes in danger. Then, we will think about ways we can teach other people to protect	• We are going to read a story today about a boy who looks different from everyone else in his school. We will read about how it makes him feel. As we hear the story, I want you think about how you would feel if you were the boy and what you would want others to know about you. • Today we will read a story about a girl who is planning a very important birthday party for her brother. Many things go wrong in the story, but the girl doesn't give up. As you read, I want you to think about a time that you kept trying even though something you wanted to do was hard.

elephants and write a letter to a newspaper editor about our ideas.	

Activating Background Knowledge and Experience

Another effective strategy for increasing comprehension for beginner-level students is to activate their background knowledge and experiences. Before they read a text, ask students what experience they have with a topic or situation that will be presented in the text. For instance, consider the elephant example from the table above. After stating the purpose for reading, you can help students connect to the topic by asking "What do you already know about elephants and how they live?" Students can discuss ideas in pairs or groups of three, or the whole class can share information that is recorded on an idea web on the board or chart paper. This strategy also works with fiction texts. Using the example of the girl who was planning the birthday party, you could ask "Have you ever planned a party for someone? What did you have to buy or do to get ready?" or perhaps, "Have you ever tried to do something and everything went wrong? What happened?" Asking students to thoughtfully consider what they already know or what experiences they can relate to can help them make a personal connection to what they will read.

Pre-Teaching Vocabulary

For students who are just beginning to read, unfamiliar words can be a source of frustration and impede comprehension. While it is not possible – or advisable – to teach students every potentially unfamiliar word before they read, it can be helpful to discuss key terms before reading. If we consider the example of tennis player Serena Williams from the table, it could be helpful for the class to share ideas in a web with the word *tennis* written in the middle. On lines around the word *tennis*, phrases like *equipment used to play* or *action words* can be added. Then, students and the teacher can share words they know such as *racquet, ball, net* or *serve, hit,* and *swing*. Illustrations can also be added to the words. A web can be completed for fiction texts as well. For the example of the boy who is different from his peers, the web might contain emotions or feeling words that students would encounter as they read.

DURING READING

Note-Taking Guides and Graphic Organizers

Another way to support reading comprehension is to provide students with a graphic organizer or guide for recording information as they read. For beginner-level students, these guides should be fairly simple. For instance, a non-fiction guide for the life cycle of a butterfly example might look like this:

Name of the Step	What happens?	Draw a picture
1:		
2:		
3:		
4:		
5:		

For a fiction text, such as the one about the boy who is different or the story about the girl planning a party, a simple Beginning-Middle-End graphic organizer is appropriate for beginning readers. Guiding questions and page numbers can be included or omitted depending on the type of support students need. Here is an example:

Beginning: pages 1-5 What has happened to the character? How does the character feel at this part of the story?	
Middle: pages 6-10 What went wrong? How does the character feel at this part of the story?	
End: pages 10-15 Did the character fix the problem? How? How does the character feel now?	

Students can start to complete guides and graphic organizers with illustrations and words and eventually write phrases and full sentences as their proficiency increases.

AFTER READING

The graphic organizers above can help students collect information as they read. They can then use this information to complete meaningful activities after reading. Here are a few ideas about post-reading activities for beginner-level students.

Making Maps or Informational Posters for Non-Fiction Texts

After students have read a non-fiction text and used a note-taking guide to collect information, they can use the guide to make a map or poster about the topic. This activity works well as a group activity. Have students start by writing the title or topic in the center of a large piece of paper. For instance, a group working on the text about elephants would write *How Elephants Live* in the center. Then, group members work together to determine what information to include on the map or poster. Sub-topics might include *habitat, families, diet,* and *dangers*. Then, students can add details from the text and illustrations under each sub-topic. To extend this further, students can present their maps or posters to the class or other small groups.

Scaffolded Writing

An excellent way to support reading comprehension is to ask students to write about what they have read. As noted above, students can use their note-taking guides or graphic organizers as a tool to support their writing. The teacher can model completing the writing exercise first and provide sentence frames to support students' writing. Non-fiction and fiction texts will lend themselves to different types of prompts, but both are a great way to help beginner-level learners practice their decoding, spelling, sight word vocabulary, and sentence formation. Examples are shown below.

Non-Fiction: Life Cycle of a Butterfly	**Fiction: The Boy Who Was Different**
Prompt: Write a paragraph that tells what happens in each of the five steps in the life cycle of a butterfly. There are ____ steps in the _____ life cycle. The first step is called _____ and it is when _____	**Prompt:** Write about a time when you felt different. Tell what happened and how you felt. I felt different when _____ _____. I felt different because _____.

_____. The second step is _____ and it is when _____. The third step is _____ and it is when _____ _____. Etc.	This made me feel _____ because _____ _____.
Non-Fiction: How Serena Williams Became Famous **Prompt:** What events led to Serena Williams becoming a famous tennis player? Tell about at least three events in her life that helped her become famous. _____ _____ worked very hard to become _____ _____. First, she _____ _____. Next, she _____ _____. Then, she _____ _____. These things helped her to become a famous tennis player because _____ _____.	**Fiction: Planning a Birthday Party** **Prompt:** Think about the steps the character took to plan the party. What did she try to do and what went wrong? _____ tried to plan a _____ party for her _____. First, she _____, but then _____. Next, she _____, but that didn't work because _____. Then she _____, but _____ _____. She felt _____, but the party was a success anyway because _____ _____.

As with the maps or posters, a nice extension for this activity is to have students share their writing with the class, a partner, or a small group. Also, these kinds of responses can be completed in a journal or a writing notebook. This is a great way to look back and see how much progress students have made as their literacy continues to develop.

This month's Teacher's Corner has focused on several activities that can help beginner-level students develop literacy skills. The activities presented support both receptive and productive literacy skills, and it should be emphasized that these two types of skills support each other. It is important to remember that consistent and frequent practice with letter sounds and activities that support reading are critical to helping beginners become fluent readers and effective writers.